



## Operational Technology Defender Fellowship

### U.S. Department of Energy Launches Program to Enhance Partnerships Between Government and Critical Infrastructure

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) took another major step to defend the critical infrastructure that underpins America’s security and prosperity by launching the Operational Technology (OT) Defender Fellowship. The OT Defender Fellowship program is a new collaboration with DOE’s Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies’ (FDD) Center for Cyber and Technology Innovation (CCTI) that will deepen the cybersecurity knowledge of key U.S. front-line critical infrastructure defenders.

“Operational technology security managers keep the core physical systems of our energy infrastructure running smoothly in the face of natural disasters, physical sabotage, and nation-state cyberattacks,” said Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette. “In support of the President’s Cybersecurity Workforce Executive Order, the Department of Energy is proud to support this elite training program to create opportunities to grow America’s cyber workforce.”

The OT Defender Fellowship is a year-long program for operational technology security managers throughout the energy sector to engage with cyber and national security experts across the U.S. government. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the strategies and tactics of America’s adversaries and how U.S. government cyber operators defend our nation.

The Fellowship aligns with the bipartisan recommendations of the congressionally mandated Cyberspace Solarium Commission (CSC).

“Securing our energy infrastructure is not an abstract policy idea, it is an immediate need to protect our nation from the real threat of malign actors,” said Sen. Angus King, CSC co-chair. “The Cyberspace Solarium Commission report advocates for operationalizing cybersecurity collaboration with the private sector and reshaping how the U.S. government coordinates with the private sector; these steps are central to our collective defense. There is no question that this new DOE initiative will better protect our country from cyberattacks.”

“My fellow Commissioners recognized what we at Southern Company have also long understood: Our national security depends on collaboration between the private sector and the government,” said CSC Commissioner Tom Fanning, Chairman, President & CEO of Southern Company. “I have long supported efforts like the OT Defender Fellowship to provide opportunities for closer interaction between critical infrastructure providers and U.S. government cyber operators.”

"As a world leader in securing operational technology and industrial control systems from cyber threats, INL is looking forward to sharing our knowledge and experiences with the private sector through this important fellowship," said Zach Tudor, INL associate laboratory director for National and Homeland Security programs. "This fellowship expands on many of the lab's successful research and development programs, our at-scale testing capabilities, and our comprehensive training and workforce development initiatives."

"Understanding an adversary's strategy and tactics is critical to effective defense," said CSC Commissioner Samantha Ravich, chair of FDD's CCTI. "The Cyberspace Solarium Commission recognized Department of Energy's unique role and expertise as sector-specific agency for the energy sector. DOE's National Labs are unparalleled centers of excellence in scientific research and innovation, and INL is a world leader in security for industrial control systems. FDD's Center on Cyber and Technology Innovation is pleased to be a part of this unique program to improve ability of OT specialists to defend our lifeline critical infrastructure."

For more on the OT Defender Fellowship, visit <https://inl.gov/otdefender/>.

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